

#TRENDY THURSDAY

EUROPEAN UNION

Europe's Support for Hungary Amid Crisis and Key Priorities for the EU

President von der Leyen expressed solidarity with Hungary following the devastating floods, emphasizing EU support through mechanisms like Copernicus and the Solidarity Fund. She outlined three major challenges during Hungary's Presidency of the Council: Ukraine, competitiveness, and migration. VDL called for continued military, financial and political backing for Ukraine, criticized Hungary's divergence from the EU's Single Market principles and highlighted the need for unity on decarbonization and energy independence. On migration, she stressed the importance of coordinated European efforts, critiquing Hungary's actions on border security. Concluding, she reiterated the need for unity and cooperation within the EU.

HEALTH

Tackling Mental Health Stigma and Promoting Inclusivity Across Europe

Ahead of World Mental Health Day, Commissioner Kyriakides emphasized the importance of mental health and the need to break down the stigma that isolates many individuals facing mental health challenges. She highlighted the EU's commitment to addressing this issue, particularly in workplaces, through initiatives like the EU Support Package on Stigma and the Health Workplaces Campaign. The Commissioner stressed the importance of inclusion, with €18 million allocated to projects supporting vulnerable populations, such as displaced Ukrainians and young people. The "In This Together" campaign aims to raise awareness and foster a cultural shift towards acceptance and openness around mental health, promoting dignity, equity and support for all.

DIGITAL

EU Proposes Digital Travel Application for Smoother and Safer Border Crossings

The European Commission has introduced two proposals to digitalize passports and identity cards through an "EU Digital Travel application," aimed at easing travel to and from the Schengen area. The initiative allows travellers, both EU and non-EU citizens, to create and store digital travel credentials, facilitating faster border checks and enhancing security. The digital credentials, stored on mobile devices, will enable advance submission of travel documents, reducing wait times and improving efficiency at border crossings. The system also supports EU citizens' freedom of movement by simplifying administrative processes. Set to be operational by 2030, the application aligns with the EU's broader "Digital Europe" strategy.

EUROPEAN UNION

MEPs Clear Commissioners-Designate for Confirmation Hearings After Conflict of Interest Review

The European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee (JURI) has completed its review of potential conflicts of interest for all 26 Commissioners-designate, allowing the confirmation hearings to proceed as scheduled. The committee assessed the declarations of interest submitted by each Commissioner-designate, ensuring no conflicts existed with their assigned portfolios. These declarations will be made public before the hearings. JURI Chair Ilhan Kyuchuk emphasized the thoroughness of the review and expressed satisfaction with the process. The next step involves each Commissioner-designate being heard by their respective parliamentary committees.

HEALTH

HERA Invest's First Agreement Boosts R&D Against Health Threats

The European Commission's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and the European Investment Bank signed the first HERA Invest agreement, providing €20 million to French biopharmaceutical company Fabentech. This investment supports Fabentech's development of broad-spectrum antibody-based therapeutics to combat biological health threats. HERA Invest, part of the EU4Health program, aims to stimulate innovation in health-related R&D, especially in addressing pandemic-prone pathogens, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and antibiotic resistance. More investments with European companies are expected to enhance the EU's health preparedness and response capabilities.

COHESION

The 22nd European Week of Regions and Cities

At the 22nd European Week of Regions & Cities, Commissioner Elisa Ferreira and President Vasco Cordeiro highlighted the successes of the EU's Cohesion Policy, which has bolstered economic, social and territorial unity across Europe. Over the past five years, the Policy has supported millions of businesses, improved education, created jobs, enhanced flood protection, and advanced digital and green transitions. The event also discussed the future of Cohesion Policy, emphasizing the need for performance-based models and investment in critical technologies like clean and biotech to ensure Europe's future competitiveness. The discussions aim to shape the next phase of Cohesion Policy for 2028-2034.